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Vancouver metro

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metroVIEWS

JEN ST. DENIS/METRO

FRONDS IN COLD PLACES

English Bay's palm trees thrive in winter weather

metroNEWS

Now arriving: Better transit

EXPANSION PLAN

Funds needed for SkyTrain, SeaBus improvements

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

Transit customers should now be seeing increased capacity on Seabus, Skytrain and Canada Line, with more improvements on the way for bus and HandyDART service.

The upgrades, which will be rolled out every three months, are part of the first $2 billion phase of a transit improvement plan for Metro Vancouver, jointly paid for by the federal and provincial governments and Metro Vancouver municipalities.

Improvements announced Jan. 17 include 11 per cent more capacity on the Canada Line during peak periods, more frequent peak-hour service and more mid-day and early evening service on weekends on the Expo and Millennium SkyTrain lines, and SeaBus sailings every 15 minutes on Sundays and holidays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Twenty-eight new SkyTrain cars are on order and will be delivered in 2018.

More buses are on the way as well, promised Desmond. Starting in April, TransLink will be announcing more buses for overcrowded routes, new B-line routes and adding routes to areas that currently have no bus service. The transit authority also plans to add 45,000 more HandyDART trips per year.

"We're bringing on new buses right now," Desmond said. "Those buses are intended to replace aged equipment, we're going to keep that aged equipment in service a little bit longer because it's really more important to get that capacity up right now than to retire those buses."

To pay for the Phase 1 improvements, TransLink will raise fares by five to 10 cents for a single zone starting in July, and municipalities will raise property taxes by an average of $3 per household.

Vancouver's Trump Tower showered with 'unpresidented' online reviews metroNEWS

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‘Unpresidented’ reviews

POLITICS

Critical quips for new Trump tower pour in on Google

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

If you’re looking for a luxury hotel offering “unpresidented” guest service, “only takes Russian Rubles” currency, and “sucked, bigly,” look no further than the bizarre Google reviews pouring in for Trump International Hotel & Tower Vancouver.

The Georgia Street tower is expected to open this month and bears the name of incoming President and hotelier Donald Trump, who is poised to be inaugurated Friday.

The Vancouver branding has drawn criticism from Vancouver politicians, one of whom called it a “beacon of racism” because of its namesake’s promises to ban Muslims from entering the U.S. and remarks labeling Mexicans “rapists.”

All but two of the 58 anonymous, user-submitted written reviews for the hotel that accompany its Google search and map listing are negative — most of them mocking the Trump brand using the President-Elect’s own insults and idioms.

“Unpresidented care for guests,” quipped Grant Moore, who gave the hotel just one-of-five stars.

It was a reference to Trump’s Dec. 17 tweet in which he misspelled “unprecedented.”

Another reviewer, Jordan Ivey, blasted the Trump brand as “a flaming pile of garbage,” using Trump’s reference to Buzzfeed after the U.S. website published a British intelligence dossier on the President-Elect’s alleged activities in Russia and the possibility that country might use it to blackmail him.

“Only takes Russian Rubles,” joked reviewer Bradley Clark, adding a typical Trump twitter insult: “Sad.”

The unverified allegations in that dossier — whose intelligence source was confirmed as authentic by news outlets — were the butt of many of the reviewers’ jokes, particularly claims that during one Russian visit Trump paid sex workers to urinate on a hotel bed in which President Barack Obama previously slept.

“Concierge offered to upgrade me and give me the golden special,” joked user E. Smith.

Not all commenters panned the unopened hotel, however. Two written reviews gave Trump tower five-of-five stars, and offered their own colourful insults — to anti-Trump liberals.

“It was AMAZING!” said Phonse Musik. “I had a long flight from Canada, and all I wanted was a shower. I turn on the water and LIBERAL TEARS flowed out of the golden faucet!”

Another pro-Trump reviewer continued in that vein, “What a relaxing time here!” wrote Derp O. “It was a great experience for me because I didn’t have to run into any liberal entitled freeloading leeches who love to complain.”

Vancouver’s Trump Tower was developed by local developer Holborn Group. While some hotels bearing the Trump name in other cities have rebranded themselves “Scion” — which Trump Hotel chain said in a statement means a “descendant of a notable family” — Vancouver’s retains the original branding.

In November, Vancouver and Manhattan’s Trump hotels were briefly renamed on Google Maps by pranksters: “Dump Tower.” The Internet giant apologized for the incident.

Concierge offered to upgrade me and give me the golden special.
E. Smith
Inconveniently tiny drawer, faucet and door handles etc. As a person with regular-sized hands I could barely open a thing.
Laura Michelle

A man wearing an oversized Donald Trump head protests outside the still under construction Trump International Hotel and Tower, during demonstration. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Don't pity the palms — they are tougher than you think

HORTICULTURE

Though not impervious, trees suited to sub-zero areas

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

Palm trees surviving a Canadian winter? It's possible, especially in Vancouver, and even this winter's cold snap was no problem for the city's palm trees at English Bay, according to a horticulturalist.

The Chusan Palms, also known as Windmill Palms, at English Bay are well-suited to living in below-freezing environments, said Douglas Justice, associate director of horticulture at UBC Botanical Garden.

"The palm trees, actually, in this weather are doing very well," he said.

"It's native to the mountains in Yunan, (China). It has a pretty big range. It can get cold there."

The palms can survive as long as ice does not form at the tops of the trees, where the leaves are, Justice explained.

"If we have freezing rain and we get ice in the crown, and it freezes hard, that can kill the crown of the plant. And that's the only place where new growth comes in those palms," he explained.

"If you kill the top, that's it — it's finished."

But other than their delicate crowns, the palms are hardier than many people think, he said.

"It has to get very cold to actually kill one of those things outright," he said.

"We find that as long as the temperature doesn't go below -12 C ... at -12 C you start to see maybe a little damage. But those trees won't be killed unless the temperatures go much below that."

The palm trees at English Bay in mid-December 2016, the start of the recent cold spell. JEN ST. DENIS/METRO

> **It has to get very cold to actually kill one of those things.**
> Douglas Justice

The 60 palm trees in English Bay were planted there about 30 years ago, the Vancouver Park Board told Metro in an emailed statement.

But it's probably not a good idea to plant palm trees elsewhere in the Lower Mainland because higher elevations and areas further inland are not suitable for them, said Justice.

"One of the reasons you don't see them much outside of Vancouver is because anywhere where you get cold wind in the winter, like Abbotsford — that sustained drying cold, that'll kill them."

RENTING

Shopping for a good landlord

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

Metro Vancouver's rental market was not kind to renters in 2016: rents soared, evictions increased and many renters found it nearly impossible to find a place.

Now a landlord industry group wants to make it easier for renters to tell which landlords have taken the time to understand provincial tenancy laws through a new online registry.

"The tenant was very much front-of-mind with this initiatives," said David Hutniak, president of Landlord BC. "We want tenants to have increased confidence about who they're renting from."

The program is for both large and small landlords, but Hutniak especially hopes the smaller landlords of basement suites or other secondary units will take advantage. Around 200 landlords have already signed up.

Hutniak said the focus is on understanding B.C.'s Residential Tenancy Act because many of the problems that occur between tenants and landlords come from poor knowledge of the rights and responsibilities under the act.

For $39, landlords can sign up for an online course that teaches them the ins and outs of B.C.'s Residential Tenancy Act. Landlords who successfully complete the modules are then "I Rent It Right" certified, and renters will be able to see if a potential landlord is certified via landlordbc.ca.

Aly Jiwan, CEO of Redbrick Properties, is already certified through a Landlord BC program for landlords of large buildings. He helped test the "Rent It Right" program and plans to require his property managers to finish it.

"If landlords can professionalize themselves this way ... it also improves our public perception," said Jiwan.

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Conflict of great interest

New York Times reporter Dan Levin set off a storm reporting on Premier Christy Clark's $50,000 party stipend. Metro sat down to talk with him about the fallout of his report. DAVID P. BALL/METRO VANCOUVER

New York Times reporter Dan Levin never expected his visit to British Columbia to earn him rebuke from the province's leaders.

But that's what happened after the newspaper published his story — British Columbia: The 'Wild West' of Canadian Political Cash — on Friday.

Levin wrote about Premier Christy Clark's $50,000 stipend from BC Liberal donations; that B.C. Conflict of Interest Commissioner Paul Fraser's law firm donated to the party the same day as someone named Paul Fraser (he denied it was him); and that Fraser's son, a former business associate of Clark's ex-husband, is now a deputy minister.

All of it, the government said, is legal. Deputy Premier Rich Coleman blasted Levin's reporting, calling his story "laughable" and criticizing the American outlet.

Metro sat down with Levin in Vancouver. Here are excerpts of our interview.

Premier Christy Clark listens to a question at the Woodfibre LNG project site near Squamish, B.C. Her $50,000 party stipend has come under scrutiny from the New York Times. THE CANADIAN PRESS

What made you look into B.C.'s political funding?

Obviously political financing is a hot topic in the U.S., certainly with conflicts of interest with Donald Trump, it's a bipartisan concern.

I was shocked that this was happening in Canada, I think Americans would be shocked, and frankly I think Canadians would be shocked, too. No elected official in the U.S. is allowed to get a stipend; that would be bribery.

I lived in China for seven-and-a-half years; in China or Russia this would just be called 'corruption' or 'nepotism.'

But here, it's just 'legal.'

The idea that a Conflict of Interest Commissioner who's never found anybody in violation of conflict of interest (rules) in all his many years, whose son works in the government he's meant to rule on — it seems like a Kafkaesque dystopian nightmare of shady politics and conflict of interest.

What do you say to people who say this is legal — they're just following the rules?

When you look at other provinces in Canada, much of this is completely unacceptable and prohibited. I find it really confusing, dismaying and horrifying even that so much of this is allowed to happen.

If you're just a regular person in this province who doesn't have access to tens of thousands of dollars to get face-time with an elected official, then you're at a disadvantage.

What about Deputy Premier Rich Coleman's remarks that your reporting was 'laughable' and essentially shoddy?

There was no shoddy reporting. It was literally just based on facts … These ministers, deputy ministers and other officials in the government who are saying the story is 'laughable' and this isn't an issue — they're profiting from a system that would be seen as completely corrupt elsewhere in Canada. I don't want to be partisan here. The facts speak for themselves. I'm just laying the facts out. The only thing that's 'laughable' is making jokes about this, because it's really not funny.

Coleman claimed one of your central facts, that Commissioner Paul Fraser was a donor to the BC Liberals, was completely untrue.

Paul Fraser's law firm also donated to the BC Liberal party, according to government records, on the same day that Paul Fraser did; and his son also donated.

At this point, they seem kind of desperate to direct the spotlight away from giving the elected leader of this province a top-up of money coming from pooled political donations, which plenty of people find objectionable.

Frankly, even if you took that out (of the story), we're talking about a walking, talking conflict of interest — who is the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. People's heads explode seeing all these details put together.

The fact that the New York Times is looking at us has made you a bit of a celebrity here.

The New York Times looks at the whole world. It's a free press. There are amazing things about Canada, but unfortunately what's happening in B.C. is not one of them. Checks and balances are important, and hopefully this will spur British Columbians and other Canadians to take a closer look at how their governments behave. — WITH FILES FROM JEN ST. DENIS.

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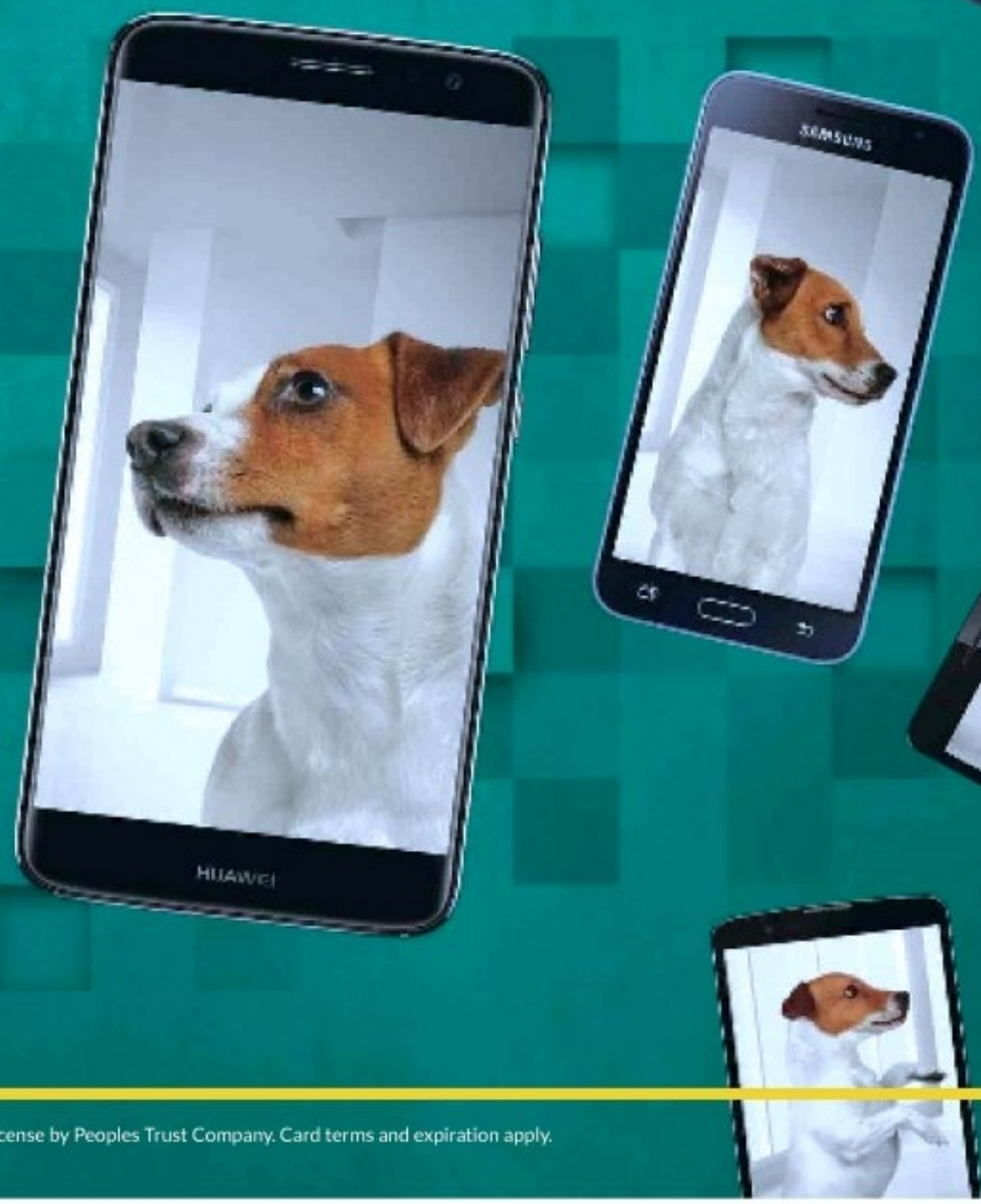

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New way to fetch a sitter for Fido

PETS

Airbnb-like service aimed at dog owners

Wanyee Li
Metro | Vancouver

It was only a matter of time before someone created an "Airbnb" for dogs. The Vancouver-based company, Go Fetch, launched its dog-sitting platform this week, where dog owners looking for someone to take care of Fido can connect with dog-sitters on the website.

The company, which launched a Canada-wide crowdsourced dog-walking app in April 2016, has already received 2,000 applications from people wanting to list their dog-sitting services.

As far as business ideas go, it was a no-brainer, said co-founder Willson Cross.

"Just as Uber has done it in transportation and Airbnb has done it in travel, we are doing it in pet services," said the 23-year-old UBC economics grad.

He, along with friend and business partner Paul Ratchford, see potential in the pet-services industry, in which North Americans spend $30 billion annually.

"With nearly 35 per cent of all Canadians owning a dog now, and that trend growing rapidly, we definitely saw a market in Canada that has not been tapped into," said Cross.

Go Fetch takes 15 per cent of all transactions from its platform and prices for dog-sitting range from $25 to $100 per night. The site had 10 dog-sitters listed in Vancouver as of Tuesday.

The company vets all applicants and only accepts about 30 per cent of them, explained Cross.

Dog-sitter profiles include information on how many times they will walk the dog, what size dog they accept, whether food is provided, and whether they already own a dog. Those details are meant to give dog owners peace of mind when they drop off their pooch, said Cross.

Bookings are also insured, which means if Fido is injured during a stay, the vet bills would be covered.

Go Fetch also has a dog-walking app that has more than 350 dog-walkers listed in the Vancouver area.

GoFetch.ca launched its dog-sitting platform this week. COURTESY GO FETCH

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Students view a parking lot near Coquitlam Central Station. Over the next few months, they'll compete to create a winning proposal to turn the site into a vibrant neighbourhood. CONTRIBUTED

Turning parking lot into paradise

DEVELOPMENT

Students plan community for 14-acre space in Coquitlam

Jen St. Denis
Metro | Vancouver

Right now it's a parking lot in Coquitlam beside the busy Barnet and Lougheed highways — but three teams of business students from Vancouver, Seattle and Portland will compete to make land around a new Evergreen line station into a vibrant urban community.

"You're looking to have a development that has an identity and attracts people in and of itself, and integrates the transit station in a way that further enhances ridership," said Tsur Somerville, a professor at the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business. "And — and the 'and' is not trivial — yields revenue for TransLink."

TransLink has partnered with the Commercial Real Estate Development Association to host the contest. Students are competing from the University of British Columbia, University of Washington and Portland State University.

The winning team may or may not influence the actual 14-acre site design, Somerville said. For the students, who hope to work in real-estate development, it's a hands-on learning experience working with a real site. This is the 14th year for the competition, but it's the first time the organizers have used a Canadian site.

The sites chosen for the competition often have some sort of challenge that has prevented them from being easily developed. The challenge for the parcel of land near Coquitlam Central Station, Somerville said, "is creating a real sense of place with what is at the moment the intersection of two busy roads and two busy parking lots."

But the potential is to go beyond simply plunking down condo towers and create a place that's "inspiring and engaging."

HUMAN SMUGGLING

Mounties 'adapted' to arrival of migrant ship, court hears

A Crown attorney says the RCMP adapted to a "rather unusual situation" when they investigated the arrival of a dilapidated vessel carrying 492 Tamil migrants off British Columbia's coast in 2010.

Charles Hough said in closing arguments at the human-smuggling trial of two Canadians and two Sri Lankans that police had to diverge from usual procedure when interviewing hundreds of migrants who had been aboard the MV Sun Sea.

Defence lawyers argued last week the Canadian men were misidentified by witnesses because the RCMP repeatedly showed migrants photos of their clients with identifying marks. One lawyer said Mounties showed "total disregard" of policies established to "protect people's liberty."

However, Hough told the jury Tuesday the police "adapted."

"Use your common sense and think about it," he said. "Putting a photo book to a witness, asking them open-ended questions: 'Who did this?' 'Do you recognize them?' Ask yourself whether that would produce reliable information. I submit that it would."

All four men have pleaded not guilty to organizing the voyage of the cargo ship, which sailed from Thailand on July 5, 2010 and was intercepted by Canadian authorities a month later. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Legal challenges launched

TRANS MOUNTAIN

B.C. First Nations battle Ottawa on pipeline approval

Opposition is mounting against the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline as three First Nations launch fresh legal challenges aimed at stymying a project they say was approved without proper consultation.

Representatives from the coastal Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish nations, as well as the Coldwater Indian Band near Merritt in B.C.'s Interior, told reporters Tuesday that the federal government failed to meaningfully include them in the planning and review process before approving Kinder Morgan Canada's $6.8-billion project.

The controversial expansion would run from near Edmonton to Burnaby, B.C., and would triple the existing pipeline's capacity. It is also expected to increase tanker traffic seven-fold within the densely populated Burrard Inlet.

Chief Lee Spahan of the Coldwater Indian Band said he has serious concerns over the government's decision to approve a route that poses unacceptable risks to his community's drinking water, should the Coldwater Valley watershed be contaminated.

"The Crown acknowledged if there were a spill or release from the pipeline, it would be impossible to remediate our aquifer to potable standards," Spahan said. "In other words, we would never be able to drink our water again."

Chief Lee Spahan, of the Coldwater Indian band, following a news conference in Vancouver on Tuesday, as representatives of First Nations addressed the legal action that they are taking against the Kinder Morgan pipeline. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Spahan said Kinder Morgan identified a safer, albeit more costly, alternative route but withdrew the option from the National Energy Board's consideration without consulting or notifying the Coldwater nation.

"For Coldwater, this is about our drinking water. It is our Standing Rock," he said, referencing the high-profile protests in the United States against a pipeline the Standing Rock Sioux say threatens their water supply.

The federal government did not respond to requests for comment.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau approved the Trans Mountain project last November with 157 conditions that were laid out by the National Energy Board. He said he expects the decision to be "bitterly disputed," but ultimately it is in Canada's best interest.

Squamish Chief Ian Campbell described the federal government's efforts at consultation as little more than lip service.

"We talk about an era of reconciliation but we do not see the actions that go with that," Campbell said.

"We're at a milestone in Canadian history, an opportunity to mature as a society where the old status quo will no longer be acceptable, that of a colonial imposition to run roughshod over aboriginal rights and title within our own homelands and waters."

Elected councillor Charlene Aleck of the Tsleil-Waututh said at least five First Nations have filed legal challenges since Trans Mountain received federal approval.

In an emailed statement, Kinder Morgan said it has been working with Coldwater since 2013 with discussions focusing on rights and title, as well as the environment, including protecting the nation's water source.

"We share the same objective of ensuring the construction and operation of the project minimizes impacts to the environment and, specifically, the Coldwater aquifer," the email reads.

On its website, Kinder Morgan says it has signed 51 community benefits agreements with First Nations worth more than $400 million, including all the First Nations whose reserves the pipeline crosses and 80 per cent of the First Nations in close proximity to the project.

But Campbell said buy-in from one nation does not equate to buy-in from all.

"We are distinct First Nations across Canada," he said.

"We are responsible for decisions within our own homelands and waters. Therefore, the one-third or so of First Nations that have signed on, that is their choice, their autonomy to make those decisions within their own territories."

Last week, the B.C. government gave its blessing to the project after securing a revenue-sharing agreement with the federal government that could see the province bring in more than $1 billion over 20 years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Deal tears national fabric: Expert

A revenue-sharing agreement that helped convince British Columbia to support the $6.8-billion Trans Mountain oil pipeline expansion threatens to tear the fabric of the country, says a resource policy expert.

The agreement with Kinder Morgan gives the province as much as $1 billion over 20 years. The financial benefit for the province was the last of five conditions needed for Premier Christy Clark to approve the expansion of the pipeline through B.C.

Clark called the agreement unprecedented because it recognized the environmental risks of locating the pipeline in B.C.

A spokeswoman for the pipeline's builder Kinder Morgan said Monday the mutual agreement gives the company the assurance it needs.

But Trevor McLeod at Calgary's Canada West Foundation said the agreement could make Canada less competitive and set off feuds between provinces.

"My concern is with the long-term viability of the country," said McLeod about the B.C. deal. He said the Western provinces joined Confederation on the promise of a railway ensuring the free movement of goods across Canada, but the Kinder Morgan agreement stretches that long-held pledge.

"I think it would probably be an exaggeration to say $25 million or $50 million a year for 20 years is going to kill the country. But if this becomes the way of the future ... and we get into tit-for-tat situations, then that would definitely do that."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Howie Mandel

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Trudeau keeping mum on vacation

POLITICS

Watchdog investigating use of private helicopter

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau refuses to say how many times he's been to the private Bahamian island of the Aga Khan, the billionaire spiritual leader who has been his family friend since he was a young boy.

Trudeau's recent secret family vacation to the tropical isle has prompted an investigation by the federal ethics commissioner, after opposition MPs complained the trip — which Trudeau admitted included a ride on the Aga Khan's private helicopter — broke the federal Conflict of Interest Act.

Speaking to reporters during a stop on his campaign-style public tour in Fredericton, N.B. on Tuesday, Trudeau also refused to say how many times he has accepted rides on private aircraft owned by the Aga Khan.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau fields questions in Fredericton on Tuesday. ANDREW VAUGHN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"This was a private vacation," the prime minister said in French, repeating what he has said for several days about his willingness to speak with ethics commissioner Mary Dawson about the trip.

"My office is working with her office to organize the next steps and answer her questions," he said.

Questions about the trip have dogged Trudeau since his office admitted, after refusing to disclose anything about his vacation for several days, that the prime minister, his family and a few friends accepted an invitation to the Aga Khan's private Bell Island during the holidays.

In the face of media pressure, the Prime Minister's Office revealed that the friends on the trip were Newfoundland MP Seamus O'Regan, Liberal party president Anna Gainey and their spouses.

Trudeau has repeatedly justified the trip as a family vacation to visit a longtime friend. But the vacation has come under close scrutiny because of the Aga Khan's foundation in Canada, which has landed more than $300 million in government aid contracts since 2004.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CONSERVATIVES

O'Leary still mulling bid for leadership

Kevin O'Leary is refusing to confirm he's ready to join the Conservative leadership race Wednesday after months of testing the waters.

But the possibility that O'Leary, a businessman and reality television personality, will enter the race is being taken seriously by candidates vying to replace Stephen Harper. The CBC reported Tuesday night O'Leary would formally enter the race Wednesday.

Amy Mills, a spokeswoman for O'Leary's leadership "exploratory committee," refused to confirm or deny the report when reached by Torstar on Tuesday. Mills did confirm O'Leary is scheduled to give a number of media interviews. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Kevin O'Leary THE CANADIAN PRESS

Feds fail indigenous kids

An outspoken child advocate is accusing the federal government of dragging its feet in implementing a funding principle aimed at ensuring all First Nations children are able to access necessary services.

At the heart of the dispute is Cindy Blackstock, a long-standing champion of the rights of indigenous children, and Jordan's principle — named for a five-year-old boy who died in hospital in 2005 as the federal and Manitoba governments squabbled over who should cover his home-care costs.

Blackstock is taking issue with documents from February 2016 that show the federal government explored different options for applying the principle, which holds that no indigenous child should suffer denials, delays or disruptions of health services available to other children due to jurisdictional disputes.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Manning's sentence commuted

WIKILEAKS

Former Army intelligence officer to be freed in May

President Barack Obama commuted the prison sentence of Chelsea Manning on Tuesday, allowing the Army intelligence officer who leaked scores of classified documents to go free nearly three decades early.

Manning, who will leave prison in May, was one of 209 inmates whose sentences Obama was shortening, a list that includes Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar Lopez-Rivera. Obama also pardoned 64 people, including retired Gen. James Cartwright, who was charged with making false statements during a probe into disclosure of classified information.

"These 273 individuals learned that our nation is a forgiving nation," said White House counsel Neil Eggleston, "where hard work and a commitment to rehabilitation can lead to a second chance, and where wrongs from the past will not deprive an individual of the opportunity to move forward."

U.S. President Barack Obama commuted the sentence of Chelsea Manning, who is serving 35 years behind bars for leaking classified documents. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

> **We are all better off knowing that Chelsea Manning will walk out of prison a free woman, dedicated to making the world a better place and fighting for justice for so many.** Chase Strangio, Manning's lawyer

The actions are permanent, and can't be undone by President-elect Donald Trump. White House officials said Obama would grant clemency to more individuals on Thursday - his final day in office - but that batch was not expected to include prominent individuals like Manning.

A former Army intelligence analyst, Manning has been serving a 35-year sentence for leaking more than 700,000 classified government and military documents to WikiLeaks, along with some battlefield video. She was convicted in military court in 2013 of six violations of the Espionage Act and 14 other offences and has spent more than six years behind bars. She asked Obama last November to commute her sentence to time served.

Known as Bradley Manning at the time of her 2010 arrest, Manning came out as transgender after being sentenced, and LGBT rights groups took up her cause and lobbied the president to grant her clemency. She was held at a men's prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and filed a transgender prisoner rights lawsuit, although the military did approve gender-reassignment hormone therapy.

She attempted suicide twice last year, according to her lawyers, citing her treatment in prison. Manning has acknowledged leaking the documents, but has she did it to raise public awareness about the effects of war on civilians.

White House officials said the president was inclined to grant clemency to Manning because she had expressed remorse for her crimes and had served several years of her sentence. The officials briefed reporters on a conference call on condition of anonymity. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GLOBAL DIGEST

AUSTRALIA

Minister defends end of hunt for MH370

Australia's Transport Minister Darren Chester said on Wednesday that experts will continue analyzing data and scrutinizing debris washing ashore from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in a bid to narrow down where it crashed in the southern Indian Ocean. But Chester declined to specify what kind of breakthrough would convince officials to resume the search for the missing airliner that was suspended this week after almost three fruitless years of searching. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHINA

Nine workers killed after cave-in at coal mine

The partial collapse of a coal mine in northern China has left nine people dead, state media reported Wednesday, reflecting the stubborn persistence of safety problems despite years-long efforts to reduce deaths in the sprawling sector. The people killed were doing maintenance inside the shaft when it collapsed. Rescuers saved one person, who is stable in hospital. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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AFTERSHOCK

Pessimism abounds for young Americans

As Donald Trump approaches his inauguration, young Americans have a deeply pessimistic view about his incoming administration, with young blacks, Latinos and Asian Americans particularly concerned about what's to come in the next four years.

That's according to a new GenForward poll of Americans aged 18 to 30, which found that the country's young adults are more likely to expect they'll be worse off at the end of Trump's first term than better off. Such young Americans are also far more likely to think Trump will divide the country than unite it, by a 60 per cent to 19 per cent margin.

70%

Nearly three quarters of black Americans think Trump will further divide the U.S.

Fifty-two per cent of young whites, 72 per cent of Latinos, 66 per cent of Asian-Americans and 70 per cent of blacks think Trump's presidency will lead to a more divided nation.

"Minority people are very afraid of all the rhetoric that he ran upon (in) his campaign," said Jada Selma, a 28-year-old African-American graduate school student living in Atlanta. "Anytime he mentioned black people, he would talk about poor people or inner city. He would think that all of us live in the inner city and that we're all poor."

"If you're not a straight white male, than I don't think he's looking out for you as an American," she said.

GenForward is a survey of adults age 18 to 30 by the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The first-of-its-kind poll pays special attention to the voices of young adults of colour, highlighting how race and ethnicity shape the opinions of a new generation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Georgia Congressman John Lewis made headlines over the weekend for challenging Trump's legitimacy to be the next president. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

More Dems boycotting inauguration

POLITICS

Congressman sparks huge firestorm with Donald Trump

The roster of House Democrats planning to boycott President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration grew to about 50 on Tuesday in a protest of the New York businessman's policies and his repeated criticism of legendary civil rights activist John Lewis.

The Georgia congressman made headlines over the weekend for challenging Trump's legitimacy to be the next president and erroneously claiming that Trump's inauguration would be the first he will have missed since coming to Congress three decades ago.

In fact, Lewis had skipped President George W. Bush's inauguration in 2001.

Trump struck on Tuesday morning, as is typical, on Twitter: "WRONG (or lie)!" Trump tweeted, citing a 2001 Washington Post report that noted Lewis had skipped George W. Bush's inauguration.

Lewis' office on Tuesday confirmed that the congressman had missed Bush's swearing-in.

"His absence at that time was also a form of dissent," said spokeswoman Brenda Jones. "He did not believe the outcome of that election, including the controversies around the results in Florida." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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JESSICA ALLEN ON PROTESTS OVER HOLLYWOOD CASTING

It never ceases to surprise that television and movie producers keep feigning shock and innocence when accusations of white-washing shower down on them.

The outrage over casting Joseph Fiennes, a white English actor, as Michael Jackson, an African-American pop star, in a new British satirical television series, Urban Myths, started a year ago. It crescendoed last week when Jackson's daughter, Paris, tweeted that the newly released trailer featuring Fiennes in facial prosthetics made her "want to vomit."

In an unusual twist, Urban Myths' broadcaster, Sky Arts, responded to the backlash and shelved the episode, in which MJ, Marlon Brando, and Elizabeth Taylor take a post-9/11 road trip. Too bad, because I'd really like to see Brian Cox play Brando and Stockard Channing channel Liz.

But I get it. What's surprising is that television and movie producers keep feigning shock and innocence when accusations of white-washing shower down on them.

This example, of course, is more complicated than most. Many pointed out that an African-American actor would've had to undergo just an extreme transformation — if not more — as Fiennes did to play Jackson.

We can't ask Jackson's opinion. But in a 1993 interview with Oprah, he was very clear about his racial identity. Winfrey went through a laundry list of tabloid stories — the oxygen chamber, procuring the Elephant Man's bones — while Jackson explained why they were nonsense. Then she got to the rumour about him wanting a white boy to play him in a commercial. "That is so stupid," he said, exasperated. "That is the most ridiculous horrifying story I've ever heard. It's crazy. Why would I want a white child to play me? I'm a black American. I'm proud to be a black American. I am proud of my race. I am proud of who I am."

I wouldn't be surprised if the folks involved with Urban Myths never saw that interview, though it was the most watched in television history. But it's impossible that they wouldn't be aware that casting Fiennes would be contentious.

It's easier to give old Hollywood a pass, as we do when grandpa Doug calls Asians "Orientals." Things were different back them: John Wayne played Genghis Khan, Laurence Olivier played Othello, and Katharine Hepburn took a turn as Jade Tan, a Chinese woman, in Dragon Seed.

But deciding to cast Joel Edgerton as Ramses II and Christian Bale as Moses, for example, in 2014's Exodus? Or Jake Gyllenhaal as the Prince of Persia? Or having a white man save jazz in La La Land?

On one hand, some of these movies wouldn't have gotten made without a bankable A-lister. (In the case of Aloha, Cameron Crowe's 2015 execrable film starring Emma Stone as a character of Hawaiian and Chinese decent, that might not have been a bad thing.) And the pool from which A-listers are drawn is very white.

Joseph Fiennes, as Michael Jackson, and Stockard Channing, as Elizabeth Taylor, appear in a scene from a shelved episode of the British TV series "Urban Myths." CONTRIBUTED

On the other, people in power could lead by example: "If eight white men — Wes Anderson, David O. Russell, Richard Linklater, Steven Soderbergh, the Coen Brothers, Quentin Tarantino and Woody Allen — were to commit to diverse casting, the Oscar conversation would be totally different," author and journalist Jeff Yang told IndieWire in a roundtable last year pegged to #OscarSoWhite. "Each of these guys can literally choose to cast anyone they want, with little opposition from money guys or studios."

Confession here: I used to get so excited when people would include Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra on Hollywood white-washing lists because it meant I could finally put my classics degree to use. "Cleopatra was an Egyptian pharaoh, the last actually," I'd say, smugly. "But she was Macedonian, descended from Alexander the Great's general Ptolemy."

More recently, however, when the same outrage surfaced over the idea of Angelina Jolie playing the Queen of the Nile, I paused.

I'm not sure sanctimonious historical arguments like my old chestnut about Cleo hold much sway today. When we talk about this type of casting, we're talking as much about how we live now as about the who, what, where and when of the subject. And anyone who rolls their eyes at that would be well advised to remember the wounded outrage of angry men throwing racial epithets at Leslie Jones because a woman put on a proton pack or those who felt there was no place for John Boyega, a black English actor, in The Force Awakens — and told him so. There are literally green people in that galaxy far, far away.

Whether a story takes place a long time ago or in recent memory, remember what William Faulkner once wrote: "The past is never dead. It isn't even past."

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

ACTIVIST WISDOM Know your history!

"Must we reinvent the wheel, or have we been in a similar situation before? Building a sense of history is important for today's activists. History isn't just what came before; it's a process of working through and evaluating things in our own contexts, with our own insights. From looking at earlier periods, struggles, strategies, gains and defeats, we can better understand how power is reproduced and find weaknesses and contradictions in the system." - Prof. Aziz Choudry, author of Learning Activism: The Intellectual Life of Contemporary Social Movements

VICKY MOCHAMA

All for one, one for all? Not quite

The Women's March on Saturday will bring together women — and men, FYI — from across the globe to protest Donald Trump's presidency.

From the outset, however, the march's effort to rally women echoed a history of fissures and fractures within the feminist movement.

Separately but simultaneously, two women — Bob Bland, a fashion designer in New York and Teresa Shook, a grandmother in Hawaii — conceived of a protest in the nation's capital.

Despite their eagerness, neither woman was a professional organizer. Further, the march was called the Million Woman March. Almost immediately, women of colour criticized the event for failing to be inclusive; racialized women with experience planning mass protests could have anticipated the obstacles. For black women especially, the name was a copycat of a 1997 march for black women which, it seemed, organizers had not known about.

The organizers quickly put women of colour at the top of the organizing committee.

But longstanding grievances had already been aired.

During the election, the Clinton campaign tied the candidate's trajectory to the 1848 Women's Rights Conventions in Seneca Falls. No women of colour were present at that meeting. (Only Frederick Douglass, a black man, was present.) By frequently citing this moment, Clinton evoked a history based on intentionally excluding women of colour.

In the activist era of the '60s and '70s, this brand of white feminism entered mainstream politics. Betty Friedan's Feminist Mystique may have given voice to "the problem that has no name" but she was also vocal in excluding lesbians. While white feminists campaigned for (some) women's rights on education, work and reproduction, they were, as a whole, nowhere to be found on civil rights.

Race, sexuality and gender are still contentious within feminism. You might call it in-fighting but it's really a push for accountability. Big or small, each conflagration among feminists is necessary to creating more a inclusive and effective movement. So-called infighting is essential for reminding us that modern feminism is still, and always will be, a work in progress.

When Lena Dunham complained that Odell Beckham Jr., a receiver for the New York Giants, had ignored her because she wasn't a model, black women called her out for perpetuating a dangerous myth about black male sexuality. Dunham — along with Amy Schumer, whom Dunham was interviewing about how great they both are — then asked Xavier Burgin, a black male filmmaker to talk the issue through with them.

Nearly 170 years after Seneca Falls, white feminists chose to listen to a black man rather than black women.

As the buses roll into D.C., remember that a common enemy doesn't quite mean we are all on the same team.

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As she celebrated her birthday Tuesday, Betty White says the best thing about being 95 is that she's still employed.

Tired, envious and gassy: Welcome to the 10-day detox

Despite a lack of evidence they're good for you, detox programs are wildly popular. Wanting to get a healthy start in January after gaining 16 pounds in 2016, **Melissa Dunne** decides to try one anyway.

Cold-pressed juice cleanses are no longer in style. Lately, editors at fashion bible Vogue, and other trendsetters, are preaching slightly less severe measures. Detoxes that focus on preparing and eating whole foods are being hocked by everyone from celebrities to fit nutritionists and cookbook authors such as Joy McCarthy and Melissa Hartwig.

Hartwig, in particular, has gained a cult following — with her The Whole30 book spending 66 weeks and counting on The New York Times bestseller list. Acolytes of hers, and similar programs, are generally not allowed to consume a long list of foods, drinks, and additives for 30 days. Many programs also offer a 10-day, or even two-day, detox plans.

If you do manage to stick with Hartwig's 30-day program, her website promises it "will change your life." But, registered dietitian Andrea Miller warns people need to be wary of such promises.

"There is no solid scientific research on detoxes, it's mostly anecdotal information," said Miller in a phone interview from Whitby, Ont. "I advise my clients to look at the source and ask themselves: 'Does (the person selling the detox) have something to gain from this?'"

The nutrition expert also points out that there is generally no need for healthy people to do a detox program as our bodies already naturally detox via our kidneys and liver. Which doesn't mean Miller is staunchly against the concept, saying that if a program helps some people get in the habit of preparing and eating more whole foods on a regular basis, then that can be a good thing.

What's not such a good thing is the temporary nature of detoxes, she warns. Programs with strict rules means many adherents may white-knuckle their way through a time-based plan only to inevitably return to their unhealthy eating habits the minute it's over.

Beyond the end of January, Miller recommends setting some SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and trackable) nutrition and fitness goals you can reach throughout 2017.

Now that sounds like a smart plan most of us could stick to for longer than 30 days.

> **There is no solid scientific research on detoxes.**
> Andrea Miller, dietician

DETOX DELIGHTS Melissa Dunne's ten-day program mixed DIY dishes and adapted store-bought bowls. MELISSA DUNNE

GOOP OR JOYOUS? TWO DETOXES YIELDING SIMILAR RESULTS

Why Melissa Dunne's first 10 days of 2016 were a struggle

For me, last year was an *annus horribilis*.

The cherry on my misery sundae was that I ended 2016 exactly 16 pounds heavier than a mere year earlier. Admittedly, I had been eating too much ice cream to soothe my frayed nerves. So, in a bid to start this year with fewer sundaes and more smoothies, I did a 10-day detox.

For the first five days of 2017 I followed the plan from Goop Clean Beauty, written by the editors of Gwyneth Paltrow's lifestyle publication.

The rules were, no: alcohol, caffeine, dairy, eggs, beef, pork, shellfish, raw fish, gluten, soy, nightshades, strawberries, oranges, grapefruits, grapes, bananas, corn, white rice, sugar, peanuts, processed oils, and processed butters.

Thankfully, I then consciously uncoupled from that detox for the remaining five days, following the rules in the new book Joyous Detox by Joy McCarthy.

These rules were, no: refined sugar, artificial sweeteners, dairy, gluten, peanuts, unfermented soy, corn, alcohol, coffee, and genetically modified organisms.

On both detoxes I had throbbing headaches; felt constantly exhausted; burned with jealousy when my friends gorged on snacks; and spent an inordinate amount of time on the ceramic throne. Mistakes? I made a few (like not realizing there is caffeine in decaf coffee).

In the end, I lost a measly two pounds. But, what I did gain was a renewed belief that I am strong enough to make this year better than the last.

That may sound a little corny to some, but after not being able to eat corn for a week and a half I'll take what I can get.

READ MELISSA DUNNE'S FULL DETOX DIARY AT METRONEWS.CA

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LIQUID ASSETS PETER ROCKWELL

This true American icon will Trump the new leader

Whatever Dante's Inferno type scenario gets unleashed this Friday when Donald J. Trump is sworn in as president of the United States, I have no doubt that the majority of the world will be crying into a large glass of something alcoholic.

Odds are Trump will be popping a few corks of sparkling wine from the family's eponymous winery his son runs in Virginia. It's unlikely you'll find a bottle on this side of the border easily if you're a supporter. They only appear to export their surprisingly decent tasting stuff to Alberta.

Better to indulge in a drop made by a true American winemaking celebrity like Robert Mondavi. The late Californian was an undisputed pioneer whose forward-thinking and class continues to inspire winemakers around the world.

His namesake 2014 Private Selection Cabernet Sauvignon ($15.99-$19.99) is lightly oaked and made from grapes grown throughout the Golden State. Rich, dark and chewy, it's ideal with red meats, and with the amalgamation in mind, a full serving of baloney.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

APPLE UPGRADE

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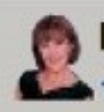
Deep red with a creamy yellow or white background, Pazazz has inherited the delicate cell structure of its Honeycrisp parent, which revolutionized the apple industry back in 1991 by combining a sweet flavour with a supercrisp, super- juicy texture.

Pazazz is not genetically modified, it was developed using traditional breeding methods. It is not being grown in Ontario because its breeders feel that, like Honeycrisp, it grows better in Nova Scotia's cooler climate.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER



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Mascarpone is a rich cheese made from cream and is a favourite ingredient for desserts, most notably the Italian dish Tiramisu. The creamy cheese is also used in pastas, risottos, sauces, cheesecakes and as a topping for soups. However, its decadent nature means high amounts of calories, fat and artery-clogging saturated fat. Ricotta, made from milk and whey, is a much lighter alternative to cook and bake with; it has about half the calories and fat of mascarpone.

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Are you or someone you know living with the effects of a stroke?

In recent years, there has been a strong interest in the use of physical activity and brain enrichment (cognitive and social activities) as methods to prevent cognitive decline in aging adults. Because the risk of developing cognitive impairment is doubled after stroke, researchers from the University of British Columbia are conducting a study to determine whether these strategies, exercise or learning new skills, also benefit brain functioning in people who have experienced a stroke.

We are currently recruiting for this study, and would like to invite you to learn more about participating if you:

- Are 55 years of age or older
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The study is 12 months and participants will receive either free exercise sessions or an enrichment program that includes cognitive training. Participants will be reimbursed $300 total throughout the 12 months.

*This research is being conducted by Dr. Teresa Liu-Ambrose

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TV BRIEF

Dolan, Orphan Black lead Screen Award nominations

Montreal director Xavier Dolan's Oscar contender It's Only the End of the World and Space's human cloning series Orphan Black are the leading nominees for this year's Canadian Screen Awards.

Dolan's French-language drama, about a dying writer who returns home to his estranged family, leads the film category with nine nominations. They include best picture, best director, best adapted screenplay and best supporting actor for Vincent Cassel.

On the TV side, Orphan Black leads with 14 nominations, including best dramatic series, best direction and best actress for Tatiana Maslany.

The awards show, staged by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, will be broadcast live on CBC on March 12. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Carrey back where it all began

TV SERIES

Actor takes a walk down memory lane for new show

Jim Carrey is standing on the steps of the Ice House, the legendary comedy club that helped launch a thousand careers, including his own.

"Man, those were the days," says Carrey, impish grin showing through a Duck Dynasty-worthy beard. "The last time I was here doing stand up was maybe more than 20 years ago with Roseanne Barr. That was a long time ago."

It's also a long way from Newmarket, Ont., where Carrey was born. He would come to Hollywood seeking fame — eventually becoming one of the highest-paid actors in the world starting with movies such as The Mask and Ace Ventura, and then more critical work such as Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.

But this is the type of club that Carrey would hone his craft, waiting for that shot at fame. The walls of the Ice House are lined with framed photos of his contemporaries and the greats who performed in a dingy room that has seen better days, including David Letterman, George Carlin, Jerry Seinfeld and Steve Martin.

But would Carrey ever do stand up again?

"I don't know. I wouldn't make a rule against it, I kind of go with the flow and what the universe wants me to do. I don't have any desire to do it right now."

In homage to his earlier days, Carrey is making an appearance at the club, but this time as a client. He's the executive producer of Showtime's I'm Dying Up Here, partly based on his life experiences and the infamous 1970's stand-up comedy scene. The show has a winning ensemble, including Academy Award winning actress Melissa Leo as a gritty club owner.

Carrey takes to the tiny stage to introduce the cast. But, despite earlier protestations, it seems you can't take the stage out of the comic. Carey launches into an impromptu mini-routine.

He reminds his fellow comic that he was there first: "I have it all. They're going for the grail. But, they can't catch the grail man. It's mine."

In many ways, that's true. Few comics will reach the level of Carrey's stardom. But, it wasn't an easy road. The show depicts stand up as combat sport. As the circle of characters will learn, there is nothing more vulnerable than an open mike, a hostile audience and a predilection for self-sabotage. And it makes for intriguing, heartfelt drama as you root for some incredibly damaged human beings.

Jim Carrey savours his return to the close confines of the stage at the Ice House comedy club in LA. TONY WONG

Although partly autobiographical, Carrey says he created the show to also pay tribute to the comedy greats that inspired him.

"I just wanted to pay homage to these places you know, like this club we're in, to the era and to that phenomenon. You know the '70s coming out of Vietnam, and coming out of all of that energy, just like these people just bursting out and like expressing themselves like no one has ever before," says Carrey. "It was a time when you're getting a little help from the godfathers like Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor. I remember being in a parking lot as a 19-year old comic and they're saying here's what you're doing wrong. Here's what you're doing right. That meant the universe to me."

Many of Carrey's experiences — not all good — have made it into the arc of the show. All his history demands a meaty autobiography. But, he'll settle for an edgy cable series. The series airs on Crave TV in Canada in June.

"I'm hoping that people will get transported back to a place that was magic man and they'll fall in love with these people," says Carrey. "Wonderfully flawed, creative, desperate people who just like them, want to be super heroes and I think it was never more evident than in a comedy club, they are part of a circus. And it's altruism as well, because comics want to love people and be loved back, that's the purest thing you can do for an audience, is to free them from their concerns." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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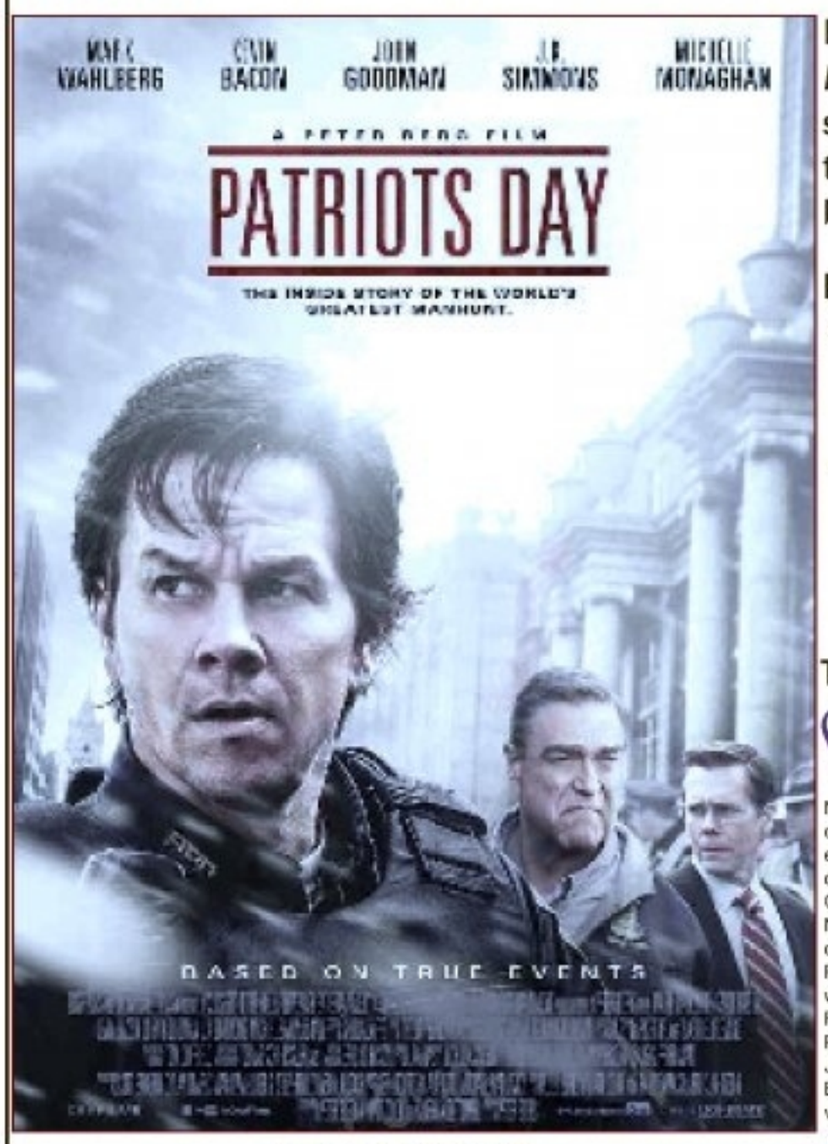

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NOW PLAYING

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Unsettling...and made for our anxious times

THE SHOW: A Series of Unfortunate Events, Season 1, Episode 2 (Netflix)
THE MOMENT: "We're all frightened"

Neil Patrick Harris's money-craving Count Olaf adds to the sense of unease in A Series of Unfortunate Events. CONTRIBUTED

The brilliant, plucky Baudelaire children — tweens Violet (Malina Weissman) and Klaus (Louis Hynes), and baby Sunny (Presley Smith) — believe their parents died in a fire. They've been taken in — kidnapped — by Count Olaf (Neil Patrick Harris), an evil actor who craves their fortune. Behind the scenes, mysterious good guys Jacquelyn (Sara Canning) and Gustav (Luke Camilleri) plot via phone.

"Dr. Montgomery was supposed to be their new guardian," Gustav says. "What went wrong?"

"Mr. Poe listened to the advice of a consultant," Jacquelyn says.

"A consultant!" Gustav exclaims. "Dear God, why would anyone listen to a consultant! The children must be frightened."

"We're all frightened, Gustav," Jacquelyn replies.

Meanwhile in their attic chamber, Klaus and Violet talk. "Sunny must be so frightened," Klaus says.

"We're all frightened, Klaus," Violet replies.

I'm ambivalent about the Lemony Snicket books this series is based on (by Daniel Handler, who also writes the show). The writing is clever, but smug about its cleverness. The pileup of unfortunate events, which are frustratingly preventable, make me anxious. The message — that pluck and resourcefulness can ease, though not always conquer, depressing situations — is true, but sad. I'm having the same struggles with the series.

I do, however, marvel at how prescient it feels for this anxious moment in time. Uninformed people acting in error because they listened to the wrong advice? Marginalized good guys wondering how to fix things? A conscienceless money-grubber who kidnapped us when we were meant to have a proper, qualified guardian?

We're all frightened, world.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Inside final days of Obama's White House and the end of an era

Less than 48 hours before President Barack Obama leaves office, CNN will air an intimate tribute told through the workdays and accounts of key White House staff members.

But however worthy it may be, this two-hour documentary, airing Wednesday at 9 p.m. EST, may face a wary reception.

For those who have disagreed with Obama's policies and even questioned his citizenship the past eight years, this film is unlikely at such a late date to stir a reappraisal of his legacy or character.

Meanwhile, for others, the film will be yet another painful reminder of what will soon be over and what might have been. Presumably without meaning to plumb the depths of despair gripping Obama's supporters, the program strikes an elegiac chord with its title: The End: Inside the Last Days of the Obama White House.

Spanning the past two months, The End ends, fittingly, with Obama's farewell address last week in Chicago.

It begins on election day, as Hillary Clinton's electoral-college defeat by Donald Trump is received at the White House with shock and grief.

But then we see Obama bucking up his thunderstruck staff.

"Everybody is sad when their side loses an election," the president says. "But we all have to remember we're all on one team."

Chief speechwriter Cody Keenan, one of the figures followed through the documentary, crafted the president's magnanimous remarks. In his windowless office in the White House basement, he concedes those words are "obviously not the ones I wanted to be writing."

Another recurring character, press secretary Josh Earnest, gathers his crew to prep for a news conference as they scramble for grounding in the flood of events.

"Just don't look at Twitter," cracks one of his fellow writers and they all laugh.

Nothing in particular is cited from the tweets Trump has made part of his routine.

"That's a good rule for life," Earnest replies instead.

Along with tying up the many loose ends of Obama's presidency, these busy last weeks are devoted to arranging an efficient, secure handoff to his successor.

"Our job is to turn it over to them in as good a shape as possible," says Obama senior adviser Valerie Jarrett.

Little wonder that "The End," despite its good intentions, will strike some of its viewers as being less about the Obama era it recognizes than about the two-month run-up to a change they dread that starts with Friday's swearing-in.

For those viewers, "The End" spells the end of the Obama presidency, and the end of so much more. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barack Obama and press secretary Josh Earnest count down their days in the White House. MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

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REVIEW

Solid looks, solid ride, but where's the AWD?

Jodi Lai
AutoGuide.com

Tiny crossovers are the hottest thing in cars right now, and any automaker that doesn't have one is really behind the times.

Instead of putting a huge amount of dollars into making its own small crossover, Infiniti is piggybacking on a Mercedes platform and has come up with the QX30.

The tester here is the 2017 Infiniti QX30 Sport model, which is the topline model that comes packed with performance upgrades and almost all the features drivers want. More on that later.

I prefer the look of the Infiniti model over the GLA it's based on. The QX30 is much more stylish, a lot less generic, and it definitely looks more modern. The GLA has a beefier, boxier and more muscular look, but I like the swoopy lines of the Infiniti better.

The problem with that pretty design is that practicality takes a hit in terms of cargo capacity, room for rear passengers and sightlines. One of the biggest drawbacks of the QX30 is that it's really hard to see out of. The blind spots are huge, the windows are tiny, and even the windshield is so swept back that it doesn't give drivers a lot to work with.

Luckily this QX30 Sport, which is the fully loaded top of the line model, is equipped with a rear-view camera along with a top-down 360-degree view camera that makes parking and squeezing into tight places much easier.

Although the seven-speed dual clutch transmission gets confused sometimes at lower speeds and can shift abruptly now and then, it's not a deal breaker.

The QX30 is powered by a 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine that outputs 208 horsepower and 258 pound-feet of torque. That's plenty to get the crossover moving, but the engine isn't the smoothest at low speeds and it displays some turbo lag. At highway speeds, however, the engine exhibits Ryan Gosling smoothness. Very little noise and vibration make it into the cabin during highway drives.

This Sport model gets no power upgrades over the regular QX30, but it does get better brakes and a suspension that's tuned for better handling. That sportier suspension definitely makes the ride in the city more choppy, but it does mean that it's better in the corners, which is an OK compromise.

The weird thing is that this top of the line QX30 Sport isn't available with all-wheel drive, which seems like a missed opportunity. Buyers have to level down to get all-wheel drive. This was likely a move to keep the price in check, especially because this Sport model has so many other features, I can imagine it getting pretty expensive if it had all-wheel-drive.

THE CHECKLIST | 2017 INFINITI QX30 SPORT

THE BASICS

Engine: 2.0L turbo 4-cylinder
Output: 208 hp, 258 lb-ft of torque
Transmission: Seven-speed dual-clutch auto
Fuel Economy (L/100 km): 9.7 city, 7.1 hwy
Price: Sport model starts at $46,490

LOVE IT
- Great driving dynamics
- Stylish look
- Smooth highway driving

LEAVE IT
- Can get pricey
- Lack of AWD on topline model
- Poor sightlines

ROUND UP

These cars are surprisingly fun and affordable

Dan Ilika
AutoGuide.com

Here's the thing about fun cars: They don't always have to be fast.

Sure, a good turn of speed is always appreciated, but driving enjoyment doesn't hinge on it. Luckily, there are plenty of affordable options on the market that can provide some entertainment this side of the speed limit. And so without further ado, here are, in no particular order, five cars that may not slay with speed, but do offer a surprising bit of fun behind the wheel.

Subaru Impreza
The new Impreza easily makes this list for its suddenly smile-inducing ways. Despite its shared bloodlines with the fun-defining WRX and STI models the Impreza has long been anything but exciting, doing little to impress when the turns tighten. That all changes in its fifth generation, with a stiff new chassis and revised suspension setup making a world of difference. Add in its reasonable price — the torque-vectoring-equipped Sport version is priced at $24,395 for a sedan and $25,295 for a hatch — and the Impreza is frugal and fun.

Mazda6
Of all the midsize sedans on the market, Mazda's offering may be the most engaging of the bunch. Sure, its four-cylinder engine can feel a bit underpowered at times, with only 184 horsepower and 185 lb-ft of torque to work with, but the Mazda6 has plenty else going for it. A rigid chassis and sporty suspension more than make up for what it lacks in pure power, leading to plenty of thrills on winding roads. The car's pricing provides another perk, with the manual-equipped Mazda6 starting at just $26,525.

HYBRID HOOPLA

Honda Accord Hybrid
The electrified Accord makes the list not just as an obligatory hybrid, but because it is actually capable of some semblance of fun in its second generation.

Honda Fit
A roomy cabin and clever configurability are just two of the many reasons this wee wagon outshines the competition. And while the Fit isn't fast, it's definitely fun. Get up to speed by squeezing all 130 horsepower and 114 lb-ft of torque out of its 1.5-litre engine and the Fit feels firm and unfurrowed. It's also easily the most inexpensive car on this list, starting at $14,950.

Volkswagen Beetle
"Smiles for miles" is a great way to describe what the Beetle brings to the table. That it rides on a platform that once underpinned the GTI certainly helps make a case for this retro-inspired ride's fun factor. A taut chassis and wheels pushed close to all four corners allow the quintessential compact to be tossed into a corner and live to tell the tale, while responsive handling give it a go kart–like responsiveness. It's also not a pricey proposition, with the Beetle hardtop starting at just $19,990 in Canada.

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metro SPORTS

Tim Raines could become just the fourth player to be elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame in his final year of eligibility on Wednesday

NHL CANUCKS EDGE PAST PREDATORS
Nashville Predators' Mattias Ekholm, left, of Sweden, moves the puck past Vancouver Canucks' Sven Baertschi during the first period in Vancouver on Tuesday. The Canucks won the night 1-0.
DARRYL DYCK/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Sakic, Koivu and Selanne to enter International HOF
Joe Sakic as well as Finnish stars Saku Koivu and Teemu Selanne are among five former players named Tuesday for induction into the International Ice Hockey Federation Hall of Fame.

The IIHF also announced Tuesday that German defenceman Uwe Krupp and U.S. women's star Angela Ruggiero would enter the hall along with builder Dieter Kalt of Austria. The induction ceremony is on May 21 in Germany. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Struggling NY Islanders fire coach Capuano
Stuck in last place in the Eastern Conference, the New York Islanders fired coach Jack Capuano on Tuesday, ending one of the longest tenures in the NHL.

General manager Garth Snow named assistant GM/coach Doug Weight as Capuano's interim replacement. The Islanders are 17-17-8 and their 42 points are the fewest in the East, leading to Snow making the move.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLS

Whitecaps bring in new faces at Draft

The Vancouver Whitecaps drafted in the seventh spot and made use of both of their selections at the MLS SuperDraft acquiring Temple forward Jorge Gomez Sanchez and South Florida forward Nazeem Bartman.

Sanchez, a 21-year native, of Spain started all 36 of his appearances for the Owls over the last two years, scoring 27 goals. Bartman, 23, had 14 goals in 37 with the Bulls. The Montreal Impact, drafting 19th, passed in both rounds. The Philadelphia Union picked up Canadian Chris Nanco.

Toronto FC was busy in the final two rounds of Major League Soccer's SuperDraft. The club added four players, selecting Duke goalkeeper Robert Moewes, Syracuse defender/midfielder Oyvind Alseth, Michigan defender Lars Eckenrode and Virginia Tech defender Juan Pablo Saavedra with the second-last pick of the draft.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jose set to stay a Jay

MLB

Toronto not keen on losing another star after Edwin exit

Jose Bautista GETTY IMAGES

The Toronto Blue Jays already lost one of their faces of the franchise this off-season. The team has made sure that Jose Bautista will not follow Edwin Encarnacion's lead.

A person with knowledge of the negotiations tells The Associated Press that the free agent outfielder is staying with the Toronto Blue Jays after agreeing to an $18-million US, one-year contract with mutual options for more years.

The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the team had not announced the deal, said Bautista passed his physical and the contract was finalized Tuesday night.

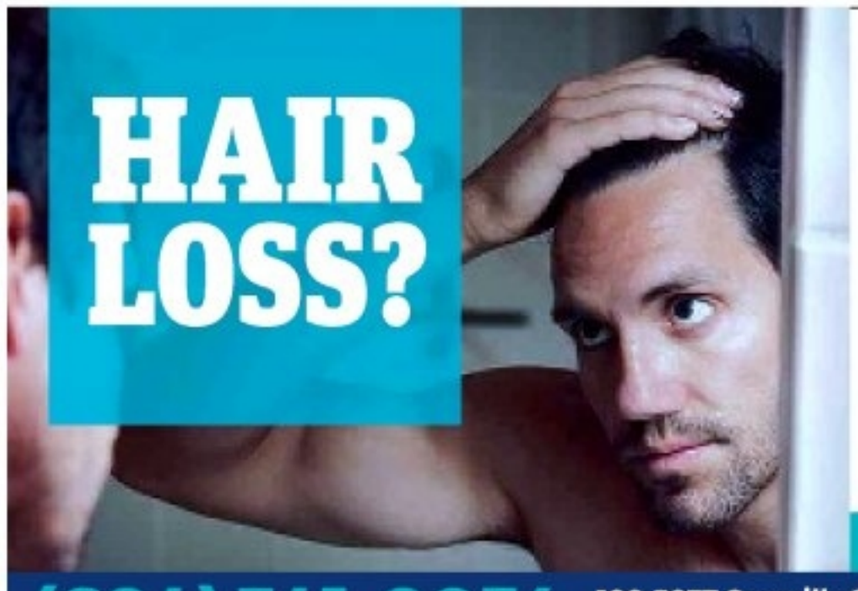
$60M
Amount that Bautista's deal could rise to over 3 years as their are two mutual option years.

Neither the team nor Bautista's agent Jay Alou would comment on the reports. Some of Bautista's teammates didn't wait for a formal announcement to celebrate his return. "Put them hands up! JoeyBats is back!!! JoeyBats19," second baseman Devon Travis tweeted on Tuesday afternoon.

"Told y'all. Lol JoeyBats19," tweeted right-hander Marcus Stroman. Bautista, a six-time all-star, hit 22 homers and had 69 RBIs last year but injuries limited him to just 116 games. He signed a $65-million US, five-year deal in 2011 and the Blue Jays picked up a $14-million team option last season.

Bautista rejected the team's $17.2-million qualifying offer last fall but in the end, it appears both sides have circled back in what could be a good deal for all involved.

The veteran outfielder's return would help ease the pain of losing one of the game's top hitters in Encarnacion. The Blue Jays were interested in re-signing Encarnacion, but he chose to sign with the Cleveland Indians. A return to the Jays will also allow Bautista to show that he's still one of the sport's top players. The Jays will bring back a core offence player and potentially reap the benefits of a slugger who is motivated to perform.
THE CANADIAN PRESS



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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Sticky Garlic Chicken

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Adults will love the flavourful mix of hoisin sauce (a Chinese bbq sauce), ginger and garlic but it's the honey's sticky deliciousness that will hook the littlest diners.

Ready in 30 minutes
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 15 miutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch chunks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup panko

For the sauce:
- 1/4 cup reduced sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup honey
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp hoisin sauce
- 1 Tbsp freshly grated ginger
- 1 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp sesame seeds

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly oil or spray a 9×13 baking dish.

2. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Working in batches, dip into egg, dredge in panko, pressing to coat. Place in baking dish. Bake until golden brown and crisp, about 15-20 minutes.

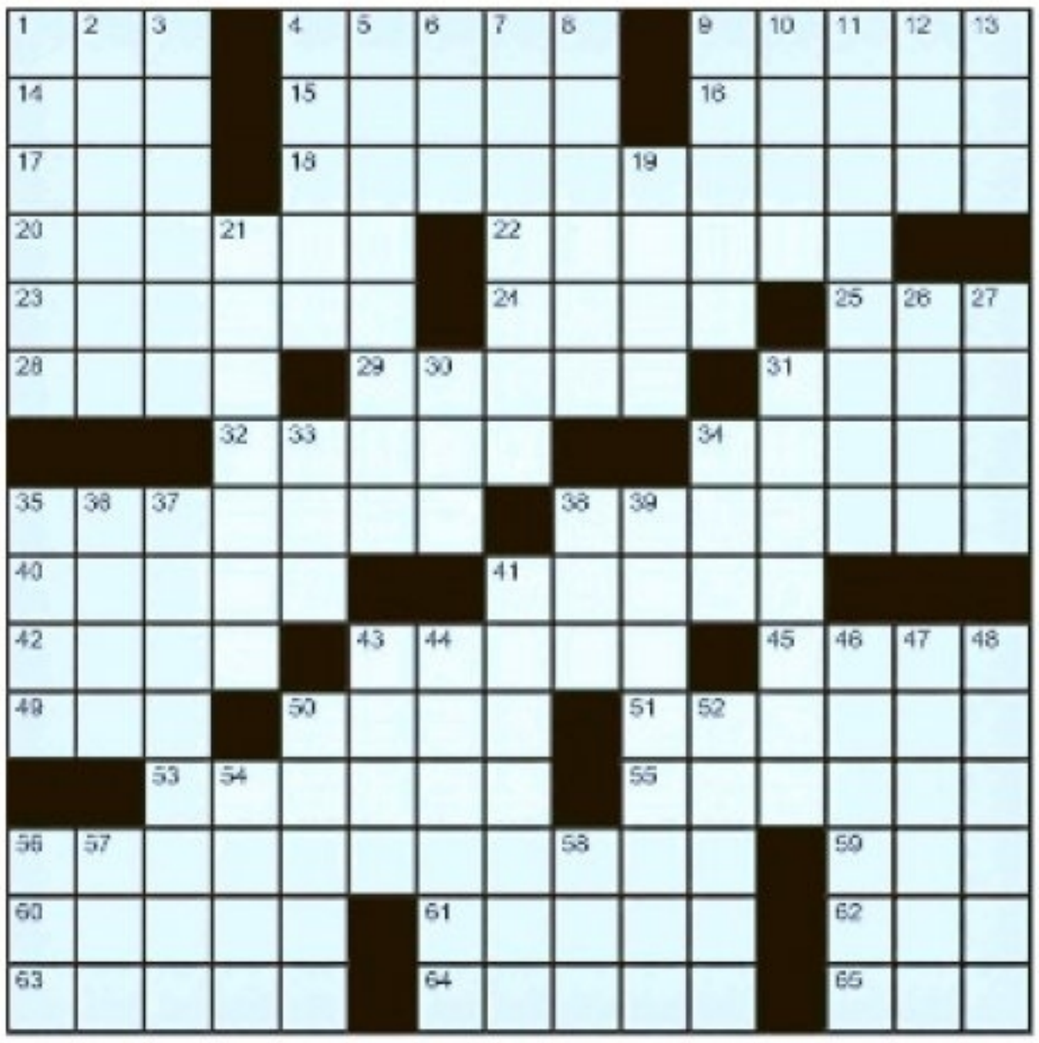
3. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine soy sauce, honey, garlic, hoisin sauce, ginger and vinegar until slightly thickened, about 2-3 minutes. Stir in chicken and gently toss to coat all chicken bites.

4. Serve immediately garnished with green onions and sesame seeds.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. High-arc shot on the court
4. Nursemaids
9. Carry on with mischief: 2 wds.
14. 'Impress' suffix
15. Historic Russian ruler
16. Thor = __ god of thunder
17. Ant & __ ("Britain's Got Talent" hosts)
18. Plane's undercarriage: 2 wds.
20. Visit a friend for coffee: 2 wds.
22. Disinclined
23. Sir __ Hillary (Everest mountaineer)
24. Eugene of "Best in Show" (2000)
25. Howe'er
28. Achiever
29. Bird of Jove
31. In-a-bowl hot serving
32. __-loading (Athlete's strategy)
34. 'Right' or 'Blue' in the ocean
35. Vivid
38. Dolores O'__ (Cranberries songstress)
40. Certain Celts
41. Prefix to 'dyne' (Toothpaste brand)
42. Stretched out circle
43. Speeds for horses
45. Provo's place
49. Sales pro
50. Like part of a triathlon
51. Ingredient in table salt, Potassium __
53. Not out/Instead in one's domain: 2 wds.
55. One experiencing astonishment
56. Newfoundland community near Gros Morne National Park: 2 wds.
59. Not new
60. Austrian pianist Mr. Schnabel
61. Loosen the laces
62. Mildly-disgusted interjection!
63. Popular tunesmith, Carole __ Sager
64. Type of car
65. Nourished

DOWN
1. Covered, as a tub of margarine
2. Train too hard
3. Get
4. __-__-one
5. Wanders
6. Ms. Jillian
7. 2004 Viggo Mortensen horse flick
8. Whine
9. Steamed
10. Sprockets
11. Arboreal amphibian: 2 wds.
12. Letters on a Bruce Springsteen album
13. Apiece
19. Canadian name from "Scream" (1996)
21. __ Mountains (Range in British Columbia)
26. __-hoop
27. Candid
30. Mr. Vigoda
31. Covers
33. Li'l response
34. Canadian writer Mr. Mitchell, et al. (b.1914 - d.1998)
35. Dr. Frankenstein's helper
36. Place for church pews
37. Canadian band which presumably might enjoy cucumber sandwiches: 2 wds.
38. Soak flax
39. Badge
41. "__ Like You" by Adele
43. Deuces
44. Commotion
46. Lead given by the insider
47. Antarctica penguin
48. Did a Border Collie's job
50. Bake, as eggs
52. Like the main ingredients in granola
54. Unfeigned
56. Apprehend
57. British singer Rita
58. "__ be my pleasure."

✷ IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

♈ **Aries** March 21 - April 20
Use all your powers of diplomacy and patience to deal with others today and avoid disputes and arguments. Admittedly, something unexpected will catch you off guard.

♉ **Taurus** April 21 - May 21
This is a classic day for equipment breakdowns or computer crashes at work. Be patient, because this will no doubt be frustrating. Use your Taurus diplomacy.

♊ **Gemini** May 22 - June 21
Parents should be vigilant today, because this is an accident-prone day for your kids. Know where they are at all times. Be extra aware of potential hazards.

♋ **Cancer** June 22 - July 23
Family squabbles might erupt today because something unexpected happens. Small appliances might break down or minor breakages could occur. Have patience!

♌ **Leo** July 24 - Aug. 23
Pay attention to everything you say and do today, because this is an accidentprone day. Make an effort to avoid arguments with others. Your own mental or emotional distraction is the reason an accident might occur.

♍ **Virgo** Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Something unexpected will affect your cash or possessions today. This could create a problem with a romantic partner or one of your kids.

♎ **Libra** Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
It's easy to get into arguments with others today, because someone might do something out of the blue. Don't get your belly in a rash. Stay chill.

♏ **Scorpio** Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Avoid power struggles with others today, because they might arise. This could be because something goes haywire at work. Patience is your best ally.

♐ **Sagittarius** Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Financial disputes with a female acquaintance might ruin your day today. Tread carefully. Don't start anything that you can't finish. (Maybe it's best not to start anything!)

♑ **Capricorn** Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Arguments with bosses and parents are likely today. Because sudden detours and surprises catch people off guard, they are easily upset. This is a tough day for a lot of people.

♒ **Aquarius** Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is an accident-prone day for you, so slow down and take it easy. Don't push the river. People feel impatient and sidetracked by the unexpected today. Stay mellow.

♓ **Pisces**
Feb. 20 - March 20
Squabbles about shared property and shared expenses might arise today. Ideally, try to postpone these discussions for another day.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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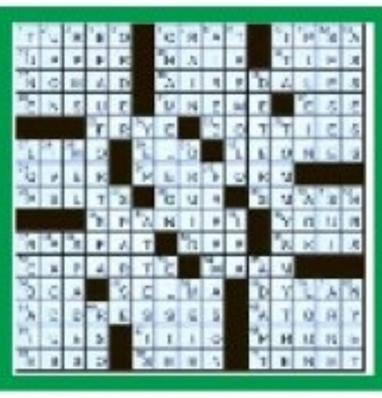

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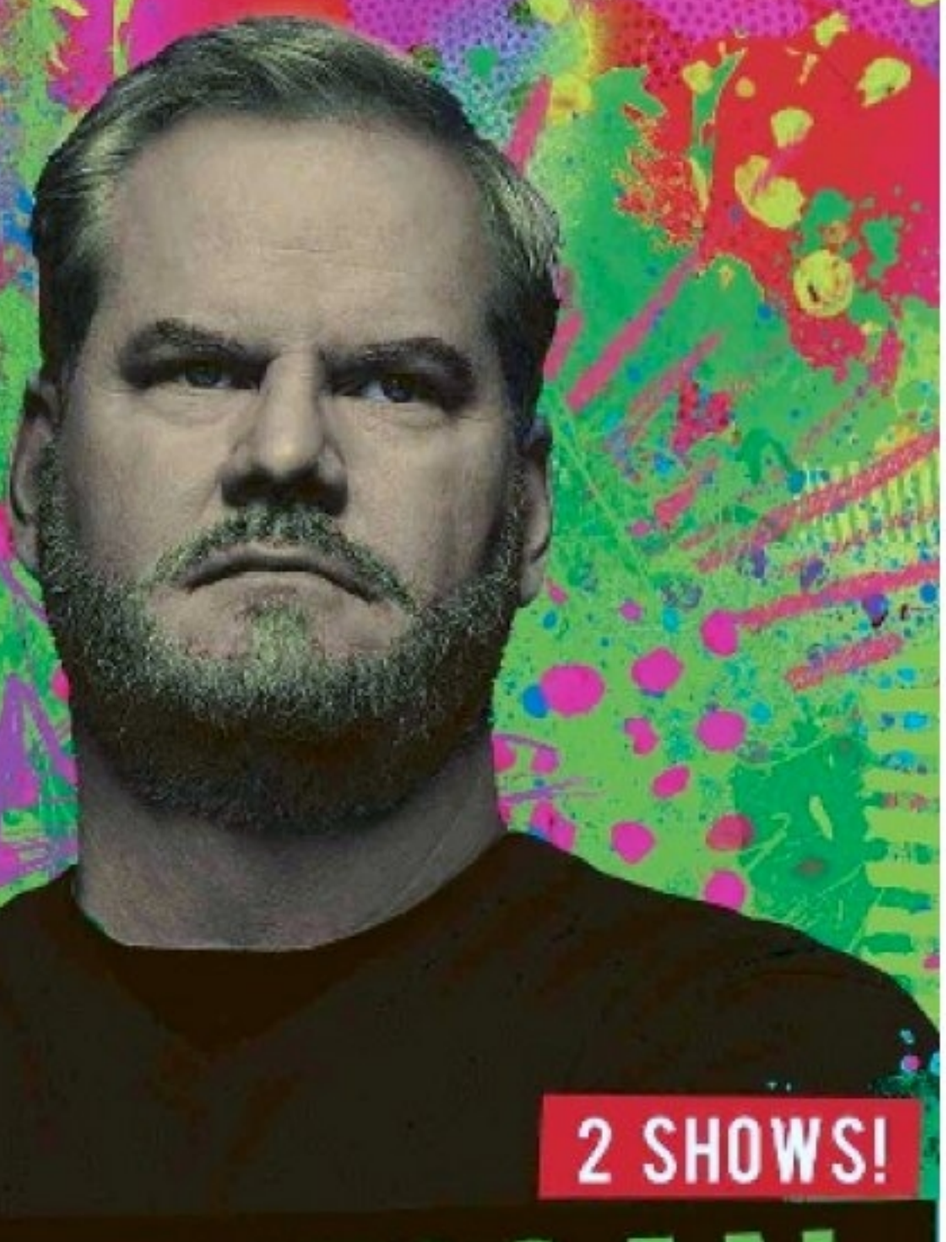

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